



The Biggleswade History Society's First World War Project



Help us remember them

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The main focus of the project, begun in July 2013, is to build for Biggleswade an archive of the town's First World War soldiers, those who died and those who survived the conflict. What better way to remember and honour them? This is an ambitious undertaking which the Society aims to tackle in stages over a five-year period, ending in November 2018, the centenary of the end of the First World War.

THE FIRST STAGE – July 2013 to mid-September 2014

'**Adopt a Soldier**'. In July 2013 the Society's members were invited to adopt and research one or more of 55 soldiers who gave their lives and are named on two WW1 memorials in Trinity Methodist Church, Shortmead Street, Biggleswade. This seemed to us to be an achievable first step and a logical one, since the Society is based at Trinity Methodist Church and also plans to preserve and register one of the memorials ahead of the 4 August centenary of Britain's entry into the war. Nearly all of the 55 men are also named on the town war memorial, which commemorates 169 Biggleswade men who died in WW1. .

All 55 soldiers have been 'adopted' and the members have been busy researching their family backgrounds and lives before the war, their war service, the circumstances of their deaths and their places of burial or commemoration. The information is being stored digitally and also presented in individual display folders for each man, which will form the basis of a **First World War Exhibition to be hosted by the Society at Trinity Methodist Church on 12-13 September** as part of the national Heritage Open Days event. Also in September, on the evening of Monday 1st., the guest speaker at the Society's monthly meeting for members will be Kenneth Wood, the author of 'Biggleswade and the Great War – Our Own Flesh and Blood'. We expect a full house but visitors are welcome for a fee of £3.00 payable at the door.

It is hoped that local people and relatives of Biggleswade's soldiers will attend the September meeting and exhibition and come forward with information to help us with this very worthwhile project, which is why we have named it '**HELP US REMEMBER THEM**'.

THE NEXT STAGES – September 2014 to November 2018

Although we have limited our first year's research to the 55 men from the Methodist chapels and Sunday schools **we are interested in preserving the memory of all of Biggleswade's First World War servicemen, those who died and those who served and survived.** The September 2014 exhibition will mark the beginning of the next phase of our research. We hope that relatives of **all** of Biggleswade's soldiers will come to our exhibition and tell us about **their** soldier and bring **their** research and memorabilia to show and copy for the archive. The research will extend to include the home front, Biggleswade's war effort and the Royal Engineers who came to Biggleswade to train and were billeted with local people before they were sent abroad on active duty. We shall be asking local families to search their attics, their photo albums and postcard collections for all items that will help us to broaden the scope of our project.

To see a list of Biggleswade's war dead named on the Town War Memorial go to:

www.roll-of-honour.com/Bedfordshire/BiggleswadeRollofHonour.html

If visitors to this website are able to contribute to the project please contact either

Jane Croot: editor@biggleswadehistory.org.uk

or

Sandra Ransom: archivist@biggleswadehistory.org.uk

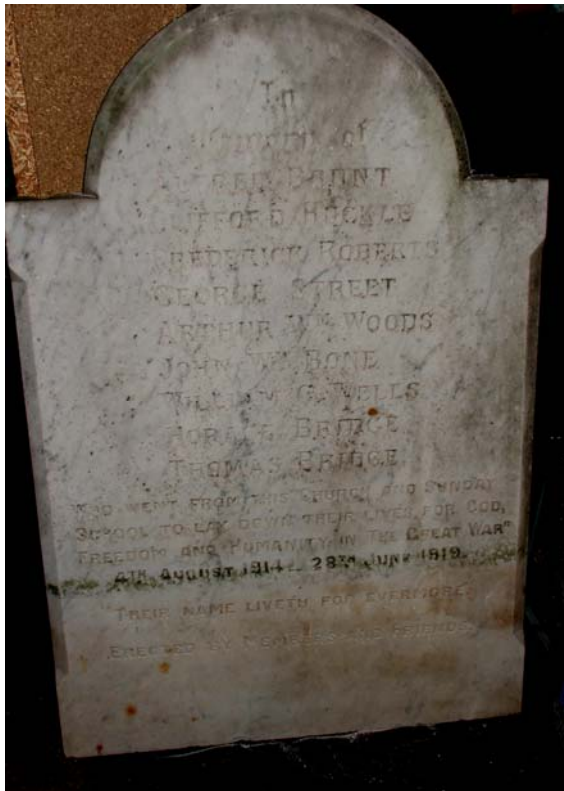
THE MEMORIALS IN TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

i) A brass plaque commemorating 47 men of the Wesleyan (now Trinity Methodist) Church

This fine memorial mounted on an oak board is included in the Imperial War Museum's national register of war memorials. Originally inside the chapel on the wall behind the pulpit, after refurbishment it was moved to its present position just inside the main entrance to the building, in the enclosed vestibule. For a complete list of the names see the next page.



ii) A previously 'forgotten' marble tablet to 9 men of the former Primitive Methodist Chapel & Sunday School (later known as the Bourne Chapel, since converted into apartments)



The tablet was rescued when the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Shortmead Street ceased to be a place of worship after the Second World War. It was brought to Trinity Methodist Church, where it stood outside largely unnoticed for many years set against the perimeter wall near the main entrance, looking much like a weathered headstone. (See the photograph.) The Biggleswade History Society relocated to Trinity in 2012 and soon afterwards identified it as a war memorial. Research revealed that it had not been registered in the national register of war memorials.

As part of its First World War project and with the agreement of TMC, in Summer 2013 the Society removed and cleaned the tablet and has since had a frame purpose made to mount it on the wall inside the vestibule below the brass memorial to the men of the Wesleyan Church. A small engraved plaque explaining the tablet's history has been commissioned and is to be affixed to the wall beside it.

The tablet will be rededicated by Rev Andrew Hollins at the Mayor's annual Civic Service to be held at Trinity Methodist Church on 16 March 2014, at which some relatives of the men named upon it will be present. It will be mounted in its new position later that day and registered before 4 August.

THE 55 MEN NAMED ON THE MEMORIALS

i) The brass memorial to men of the Wesleyan church

47 men are listed by year of death. Extra information in square brackets has been added by Jane Croot.

1914

Horace [Edwin] BRYANT
William GRAY
Fred ROWLETT
Albert [Edward] HAYNES [the town war memorial says he died in 1916]

1916

George BONESS
Archie BONESS
Arthur J[ohn] BONESS
Maurice W[illiam] WOODWARD
J[ohn] LINCOLN [not to be confused with John/Alfred John LINCOLN – see 1917]

1917

Sidney BYGRAVES
Percy COLE
Fred[erick Charles] GRUMMITT
Harry GRUMMITT
Henry GARNER
Arthur GARNER [Australian Infantry]
H[arold] Walter HAYNES
James W[illiam] HARPIN
John [Alfred John] LINCOLN [not to be confused with John LINCOLN – see 1916]
Fred[erick J] REYNOLDS
Fred ROBERTS [appears also on the marble tablet, as Frederick ROBERTS]
Horace SMITH
George SENIOR
R[obert] STOCKER
H[erbert] STOCKER
Edgar J WALLIS
Ernest J[ames] WOODWARD
Walter WALKER [listed elsewhere as Walter Richard WALKER, or Richard Walter WALKER]
George WARNER

1918

Wallace [George] ALBONE [died in 1919 and buried in Drove Road cemetery]
Herbert ALBONE [Herbert George – the town memorial says he died in 1917]
Leonard GRAY
Fred GARNER
George HOUSDEN
William LINCOLN [not listed on the town war memorial]
Walter F LINCOLN [buried in Biggleswade Drove Road cemetery]
W E [William Ewart] LAMPEY [Royal Marine Artillery]
Frederick C[harles] PAGE
Frederick SCOTT
Hubert E [Herbert Edwin] TASKER
William WARNER [date of death needs careful research – town war memorial Roll of Honour says 3/9/16]
Albert CLARK
Charles COCKS

1919

Ernest RADFORD [buried in Drove Road cemetery]

1920

Fred[erick Siah King] BECK [buried in Drove Road cemetery]

All the above, except William Lincoln, are named also on the town war memorial. Photographs of 46 of these men have been located and are to be added to the individual soldier dossiers in the Society's First World War Archive.

ii) The marble tablet to men of the Primitive Methodist church and Sunday school.

9 men are listed, apparently in no particular order. Extra information by Jane Croot in square brackets.

Alfred BRUNT [died in 1917]
Clifford HUCKLE [died in 1916]
Frederick ROBERTS [also named on the brass memorial as Fred ROBERTS – died in 1917]
George STREET* [appears to have been from an Edworth family and died in 1917]
Arthur Wm WOODS*
John Wm BONE*
William G WELLS*
Horace [Percy] BRIDGE [died in 1917]
Thomas [Henry] BRIDGE [died in 1917].

Of the above nine men, Woods, Bone & Wells are not recorded on the town war memorial. The families of Woods and Bone are known to have been resident in Lower Caldecote (Northhill parish) near Biggleswade. So far we have not located photographs of the men marked with an asterisk (*) but hope to find some.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN WAR MEMORIAL on the Market Square



Photographed on a Saturday market day, Nov 2013.